

1.9508
R24

REDUCTION IN
FORCE

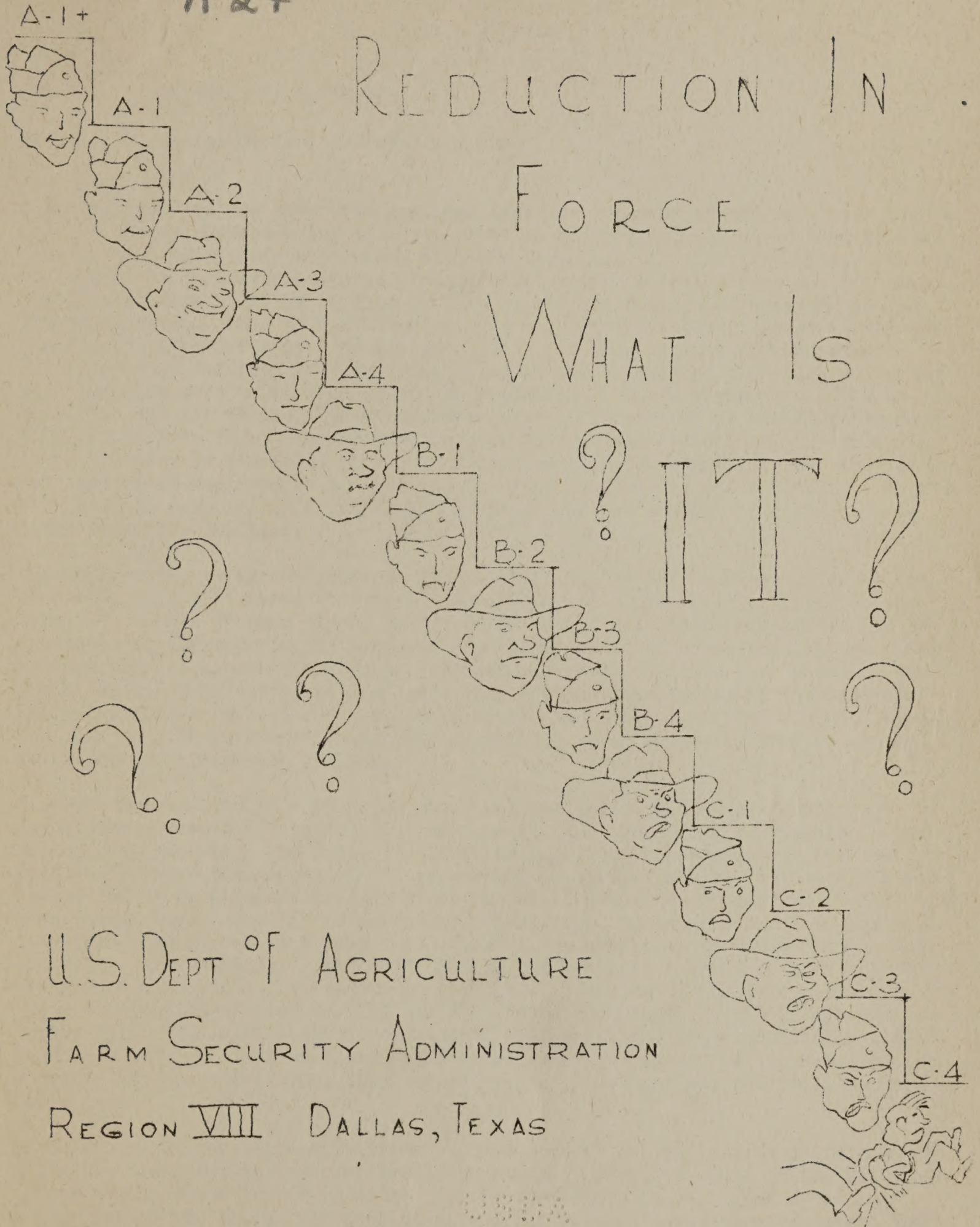
WHAT IS

? IT ?

U.S. DEPT OF AGRICULTURE
FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
REGION VIII DALLAS, TEXAS

USDA
LIB

MAR 22 1946



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
Parry Avenue at Commerce
Dallas 1, Texas

To: Region VIII Employees

From: E. Lee Ozbirn, Regional Director

I am deeply concerned about the apparent fact that so many of our employees have a lack of common understanding of a set of rules and regulations which have such a vital effect upon their employment with the Farm Security Administration. Many of us talk about reduction-in-force procedure but very few really know what it means until we receive a letter telling us that we are the subject of a separation or demotion action. Then we start wondering whether we have been treated fairly and whether the procedures that we use as a basis for such actions are designed to give fair consideration to every one. I am extremely anxious that each and every employee have some understanding of the reduction-in-force procedures for I am sure that any ill feelings that may arise from actions based on these procedures will result more from misunderstanding than from actual injustices. My interest in this matter is two-fold: First, I am sincere in my personal interest toward each and every employee as an individual. Second, it is my responsibility, shared with you, to maintain an organization to carry out our program of assistance to low income farm families.

The information in the attachments which follow is for your general guidance and I hope that it will serve to remove some of the misunderstandings which you may have. It should be made clear, in the first place, that the procedure we follow in selecting individuals for separation or demotion is based on regulations which are uniform throughout the Federal service. These regulations are issued by the Civil Service Commission and are based upon legislation enacted by the Congress. The reduction-in-force procedure issued by the Civil Service Commission in November, 1945, which is currently in use, is written under authority granted by the Veteran's Preference Act of 1944.

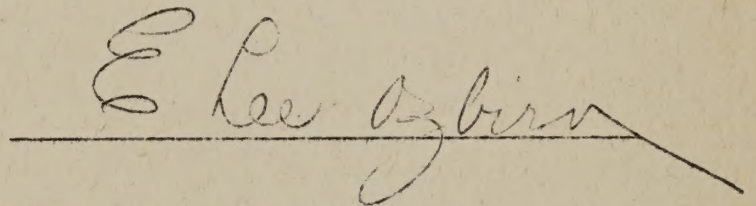
Another important point with which you should be acquainted is the employment conditions generally which force us to take actions affecting individuals in the Region. As you know, the Selective Training and Service Act requires that we restore to their former positions, or similar jobs if necessary, all veterans who worked for us on permanent jobs and who are still qualified to perform their duties when they return. This is of paramount importance. To be considered in conjunction with this is the fact that the number of our available jobs has changed considerably. For example, Region VIII in 1942, a year which would reflect pre-war employment conditions, had something like 1600 employees. This year, prior to the consolidation of Regions VIII and XII, we had something like 850 employees in Region VIII. It is inevitable, because of the conditions which confront us, that many good and efficient employees will be affected in one way or another. Quite a number of career employees with several years of service may be displaced from their jobs.

In carrying out our responsibilities we have several obligations to fulfill among which two stand out as being of great importance. First, we must follow the procedure to the exact letter in order that we might know that all employees are being treated the same. Our procedures and our actions based on procedures, must be orderly and without prejudice or favoritism.

The second important point is that we must return to their positions men and women who have served in the armed forces in a manner fitting both the letter and the spirit of the law. We want these service men and women to know that we are anxious to have them back and it behooves us to avoid confusion which would make them think that they are not welcome.

If the time comes when you as an individual are to be affected by reduction-in-force, we want you to feel that the facilities of this office are at your disposal in attempting to be of whatever help possible. Procedures have been established to help you seek reemployment and certain preferences have been set up for this purpose. I regret that we may be forced to lose the services of so many people who have performed faithfully and efficiently. Our organization has gone forward during the years of the war emergency and our records have been outstanding. I am appreciative of your efforts and sincerely hope that if the worst happens, you may be able to readjust yourself without too much difficulty.

To those of you who will continue to be a part of the organization, the turnover of our personnel and the restoration of veterans to their former jobs means that we must renew our efforts to maintain our organization. We will be confronted with a tremendous training task and I hope it is crystal clear that each of you has a responsibility to help on this important task.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "E Lee Ogden", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and extends to the right with a long, sweeping tail.

Attachments

SECTION I

Why Use Reduction-in-Force?

There are many and varied circumstances which make it necessary for us to have some sort of procedure to provide for orderly selection of people to be displaced from jobs. If we accept as a fact that many employees may be displaced, then we see the need for a set of rules and regulations to guide us so that the rights of all individuals involved will be equally respected. Some of the outstanding conditions which require us to use reduction-in-force procedure are as follows:

- (1) A decrease in appropriation resulting in a fewer number of jobs.
- (2) A lack of work whereby fewer employees are needed.
- (3) To meet reduced personnel ceilings established by the Bureau of the Budget.
- (4) Consolidation or reorganization of units of the region whereby jobs are changed or eliminated.
- (5) To provide a suitable position for the restoration of a veteran from military furlough. His job may have been abolished while he was in the service and for this or other reasons it is necessary for us to find a position suitable to his qualifications. This might involve placing an individual furloughed from a job in the regional office where he cannot now be placed, or from another county or district within the state.
- (6) Under certain circumstances, if we use reduction-in-force procedure, we might be forced to reach for action an employee with a permanent appointment or one with a number of years of service or an individual with veteran's preference. These employees have a right to displace other individuals who occupy jobs that they are qualified to fill who might not have as much preference as the employee being affected. We, therefore, use reduction-in-force procedure to provide such employees with what is known as "reassignment right".

SECTION II

How does reduction-in-force work?

In attempting to explain the workings of reduction-in-force procedure, we are going to do two things. First, we have provided a diagram immediately following this section, showing, in order, how individuals are placed by groups within a certain area where they compete for jobs. Second, we will present a series of questions and answers confined to those which are generally asked and which seem to us to be of most common interest to all employees.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Question 1. Who prepares reduction-in-force lists and where do the records come from?

Answer: Reduction-in-force lists are prepared in the Regional Personnel office for approval by the Regional Director or the Regional Personnel Officer. These lists are prepared based on records in the personnel office which are kept current from the date of your entrance on duty. The records include information which you put on your application as well as information received from other Federal agencies if you had prior service. Efficiency ratings and veteran's preference information as well as other guiding facts are kept current from day to day as personnel actions are processed.

Question 2. How are names placed on a reduction-in-force list?

Answer: All employees of a certain type such as County FSA Supervisors P-2 within a state are grouped in accordance with the designations shown on the chart which follows. Within each group the names of employees are listed in order of their numerical standing.

Question 3. What determines the numerical standing of an employee within any one group or subgroup?

Answer: Your standing within a group is based on two things. First, one point for each year of Federal service, and second, an additional five points in the event you have an "Excellent" efficiency rating.

Question 4. What service counts?

Answer: All Federal service counts in determining your standing. Technically, any service which is good for retirement purposes is good for reduction-in-force purposes. All service in the army, for example, is counted. All service with the Farm Security Administration counts even though retirement deductions might not have been taken out.

Question 5. How much do efficiency ratings count?

Answer: You will see from the chart that whether you are placed in a higher or lower group depends upon whether your efficiency rating is "good" or better or is "Fair". Once you are placed within a group, your standing is not affected by an efficiency rating unless you have an excellent rating.

Question 6. What efficiency rating is used?

Answer: Your regular efficiency rating received on March 31 of each year is the rating used in determining your standing. If, however, you change jobs and this rating is not considered appropriate, a special rating will be requested and used.

Question 7. What is the order of selection in determining who is to be separated or otherwise affected?

Answer: In selecting individuals we start at the bottom and proceed upward. No individual is affected until those below him have been reached for action.

Question 8. What jobs are in competition?

Answer: Generally speaking, the first division of competition is a certain area. Each state represents one competing area and the regional office represents a separate competing group. Within these areas reduction-in-force lists are prepared in order to provide competition by types of jobs. These types are grouped depending upon whether the duties involved are sufficiently similar, and are divided by grade. For example, all Grade CAF-3 Clerk Typists within a state would compete. All Grade P-1 FSA Supervisors (Farm) within a state would compete. All Clerk Stenographers CAF-3 in the regional office would compete.

Question 9. Is it possible to cross area lines in competing?

Answer: Generally no. The only exception to this is that it might not be possible for us to place a veteran returning to a job in the regional office. If he is a resident of any particular state and is qualified to do a certain type of job, then we may have to use reduction-in-force to competitively vacate a job in accordance with his qualifications.

Question 10. What are the different types of employees?

Answer: Group A are permanent employees, or generally, those with classified Civil Service Status, or employees who were appointed prior to March 16, 1942, and have served continuously since that date.

Group B are War Service employees, or those appointed in accordance with war time employment regulations of the Civil Service Commission, generally, appointed since March 16, 1942, with the understanding that employment is good for the duration of the war and six months thereafter.

Group C are temporary employees, or those who are appointed specifically for temporary jobs with appointments limited for one year or less.

Question 11. What is the difference between the preference right of a veteran of World War I and World War II?

Answer: Generally, there is no distinction between a veteran of either war so far as their standing on a reduction-in-force list is concerned. There are circumstances where a veteran might be displaced by another veteran and this results from the special rights given to a veteran of World War II.

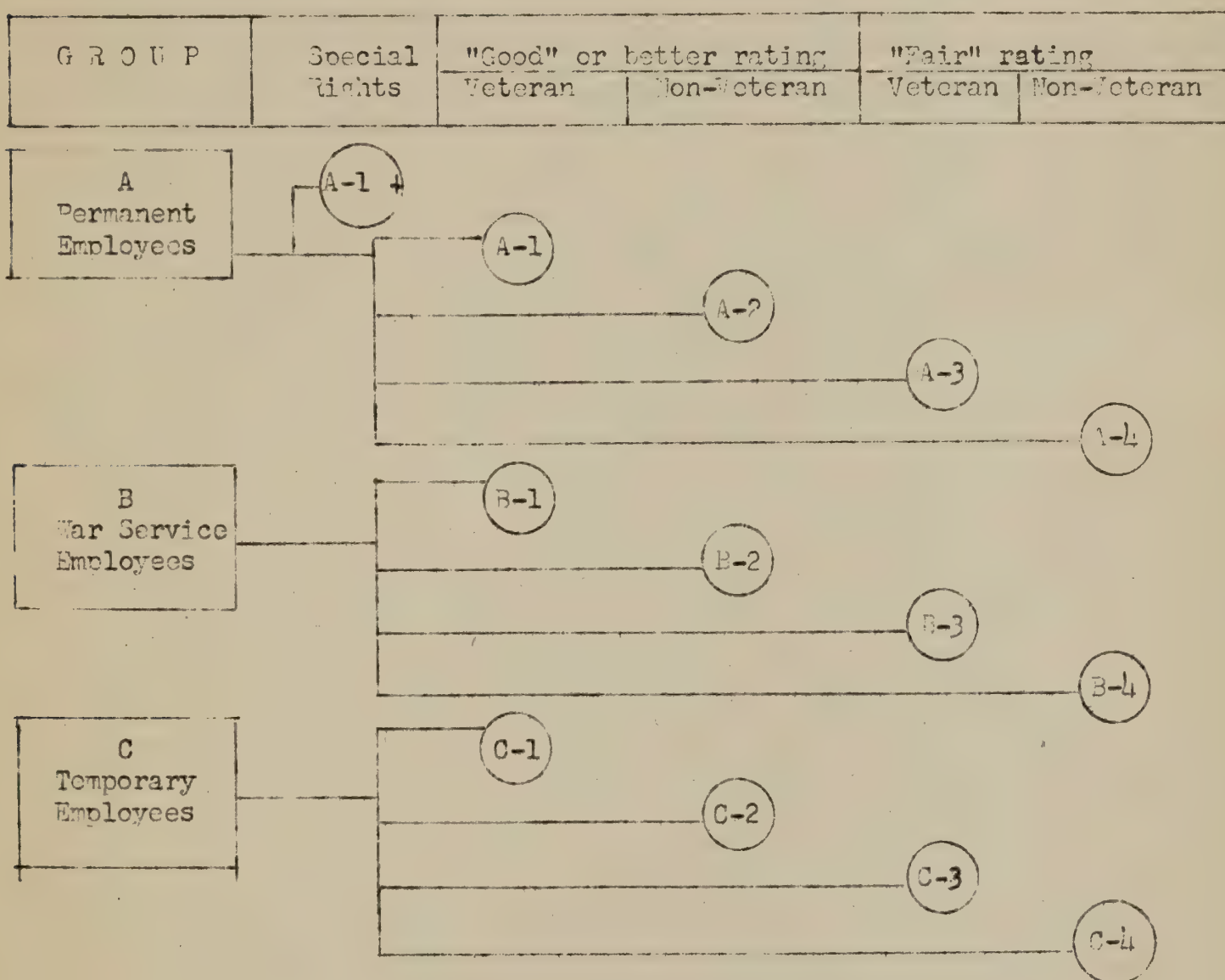
Question 12. What special rights are given to World War II veterans?

Answer: The Selective Training and Service Act gives a legal right to a returning veteran of World War II if he meets the provisions of the Act, to be restored to his job with the understanding that he cannot be removed within one year of the date of his restoration. This is the reason for the A-One-Plus group.

SECTION II

Reduction-in-force Diagram

All County FSA Supervisors P-2* names within a state are listed in order by group as shown below:



* A similar list will be made by state, if necessary, of all clerk typists; another of all assistant supervisors; another of all district supervisors. In the regional office jobs of similar types where duties are interchangeable, by grades, are used.

SECTION III

How Will Reduction-in-force Affect You?

There are many possibilities resulting from a reduction-in-force action which might affect employees of different types. Among the most common are the following:

First, if you are a War Service appointee and if you are reached on the bottom of the list, you will be given a thirty-day notice of separation. Such separation letters will be discussed a little later, however, you should know that you will be entitled to a lump sum payment for any annual leave to your credit and if you have worked for less than five years, you will be eligible for a refund of your retirement deductions.

Second, if you are a career employee and are reached for action, if it is not possible to place you in another job, you will be offered a furlough for one year. Such a furlough would be effective upon the expiration of your annual leave after leaving active duty. During this year you would be in a non-pay status and would be given first consideration for reinstatement in the event of a vacancy. During the year you could, of course, be engaged in a private activity or if it developed that there was a possibility of working in another Federal agency, a transfer could be arranged.

There might be instances where you will be displaced from your particular location or job by a returning service man but where because of your standing on the list, you would not be scheduled for separation. In such an event you may be asked to accept a transfer to another job, possibly at a reduction in grade. There are three general exceptions to reduction-in-force procedure which might affect you if you are reached for action on a list. The three exceptions are very similar and are generally described as "reassignment rights".

First, if you are a career employee, it is possible for you to displace any War Service employee within the competing area at your job level or below, even if on a different type of job, provided it is a job that you are qualified to fill.

Second, if you are a career employee with veteran's preference, in Group A-One, you have reassignment rights similar to the career employee mentioned above except that you could also displace any employee who did not have this preference.

Third, if you are a War Service employee with veteran's preference in Group B-One, you have similar reassignment right to displace other War Service employees only who do not have veteran's preference.

It should be borne in mind that such reassignments will be offered subject to qualifying for other jobs and subject to the ability to displace some one who has less preference. In providing reassignment rights, appropriate offers of positions at the highest possible level will be contained in the notice sent to you if you are affected. You will also be given a reasonable amount of time within which to signify your acceptance.

SECTION IV

What are your chances?

Your chance for being reached for separation or demotion and your chance for remaining in the service, of course, depends on your standing on a reduction-in-force list. It is also contingent upon the necessity for using reduction-in-force procedure among your particular type of jobs. We have employees in the armed forces, or have had, from practically every type of job in the region. A great many of these service men have returned and have displaced employees. The problem with which we are most greatly concerned is that of male supervisory jobs within the states. This includes District FSA Supervisors, County FSA Supervisors, and Assistant FSA Supervisors (Farm). The following information by state will show you the number of this entire group which will possibly be affected. It might help to understand that almost 100% of the men in the armed forces are expected to return to their former jobs.

FSA SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL

NEW MEXICO

1. Number on furlough.27
2. Number veterans re-stored 4
3. Number veterans to be restored. 23
4. Number War Service Duration supervisors remaining. 15

OKLAHOMA

- 1.No. on furlough57
- 2.No. veterans re-stored25
- 3.No. veterans to be restored. 32
- 4.No. War Service Duration supervisors remaining. 20

TEXAS

1. Number on furlough 115
2. No. veterans restored. 40
3. No. veterans to be restored. 75
4. No. War Service Duration Supervisors remaining. 53

SECTION V

What if your turn comes?

In the event it becomes necessary for you to be affected on a reduction-in-force list, you will be given proper notice. This notice will be given thirty days in advance of the date when you will have to leave active duty on your present job. The letter may involve a separation or may involve an offer of a demotion or reassignment.

The notice will inform you that you have a right to appeal to the Civil Service Commission regional office in Dallas, Texas, within ten days of the date of the letter. Such appeals should include specific and detailed information showing clearly that you are protesting against the separation, furlough, or demotion, and may be for one of the following reasons:

1. An error in the records.
2. An error in placing you in the proper competitive group.
3. A violation of the rules of selection.
4. Denial of right to be informed of the regulations or records or other justifying information.
5. Any other factual reason which must be stated in detail.

You will also be notified of your right to review the list and the records on which it was based.

The above are some of your rights if you are reached for action. In addition to these rights, you should remember your responsibility while in your present position and think of your obligation to the employee who is displacing you. It may be a returned service man and he should not be confronted with evidence of discord in placing him on a job. The next important thing is that if a service man is replacing you, you can be of great help in welcoming him to his job and assisting him in getting acquainted or re-acquainted with the county office, county committee, other individuals in the community or county, as well as conditions which have changed since he left to enter the service.

SECTION VI

What are your reemployment chances?

1. If you are a War Service employee, your separation notice will include information indicating that you can be placed on the War Reemployment list maintained by the Civil Service Commission. This will entitle you to preference in the event of vacancies in other agencies. The personnel office will make these arrangements upon your request.
2. The current employment regulations of the Federal government are to give first opportunity to veterans seeking employment and employees who are involuntarily separated from other agencies.
3. If you are demoted and subsequent to your demotion a vacancy at the level of your former job should occur, our policy is to give preference in order of standing on the reduction-in-force list to refill the higher job.
4. If you are a career employee, you will be offered a year's furlough. This furlough means that you do not actually leave the service but that you are subject to call in the event a suitable vacancy occurs. If you can get employment in another Federal agency prior to the expiration of the furlough, a transfer can be arranged without a break in service.
5. The Veteran's Preference Act of 1944, provides for the granting of preference to veterans whose preferences are established in accordance with the Act in the event it is necessary to fill any vacant job. Veterans are given first call on certain types of vacancies and on others are given preference depending on whether they might have five-point preference in accordance with the Act or ten-point preference in the event of disability credit.
6. You should bear in mind that the experience gained with the Farm Security Administration as well as your years of service and your status while with us, have a great bearing on your reemployment, particularly with the Federal government. If you should be re-employed, you will be reccredited with this service and your experience thus gained will serve to benefit you.

